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ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS: NATURAL RESOURCES

Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-President, Mr. Karel Kovanda (Czech Republic) on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution II contained in document E/1996/31

Integrated water resources development and management

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 32/158 of 19 December 1977, in which the Assembly approved the Mar del Plata Action Plan, 1/

Also recalling the recommendations related to water resources contained in Agenda 21, 2/ which was adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and the decisions concerning water resources made by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its second session, in 1994,

Further recalling General Assembly resolution 50/126 of 20 December 1995 concerning water supply and sanitation,

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1/ Report of the United Nations Water Conference, Mar del Plata, 14-25 March 1977 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.77.II.A.12), chap. I.

2/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

Bearing in mind the outcome of the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt a Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, which was held in Washington, D.C., from 23 October to 3 November 1995,

1. Takes note of the work being undertaken on the comprehensive assessment of the freshwater resources of the world;

2. Takes note with appreciation of the inter-sessional strategy paper of the Committee on Natural Resources entitled "Averting the multi-cause water crises ahead: key coping strategies", 3/ which contains an analysis of pressing issues with worldwide implications in the field of water resources;

3. Reaffirms the concept of water as a scarce and vulnerable resource needed for the integrated development and management of land and water resources in the framework of the national planning process, including its linkages to economic and social objectives, land and ocean resources;

4. Recommends that Governments consider adopting measures designed to improve the efficient use of water resources in the context of sustainable production and consumption patterns and the growing importance of world trade;

5. Recommends that Governments take urgent action, as appropriate, according to their national policies and priorities, on the formulation and implementation of policies for the management of water resources in large cities and towns; water resources requirements for food production relative to other needs; accelerating significantly the rate of progress in the provision of water-supply and sanitation, particularly for the urban and rural poor; the control of pollution from land-based sources, sewage and effluents; and the protection of groundwater from overutilization and pollution;

6. Also recommends that Governments, in accordance with their national policies and priorities and with the aid of the international community, take appropriate measures for enhancing national and regional self-sufficiency and capacities for, inter alia, the operation, maintenance and financing of water resources projects, and that they take measures to enhance their institutional, legal and technical capabilities in the area of water resources, including the strengthening and, where necessary, the establishment of regional organizations;

7. Recommends that Governments consider, with the support of the organizations of the United Nations system, other multilateral and bilateral organizations, and non-governmental organizations, the possibility of establishing pilot projects on water resources development and management, inter alia, on river basins and in areas that are deemed to be suffering from serious water-related stresses with a view to developing and implementing policies designed to avert water crises;

8. Urges the organizations of the United Nations system, international financing organizations, other multilateral and bilateral organizations, and

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3/ E/C.7/1996/6 and Corr.1.

non-governmental organizations and the international community at large to give priority attention, as appropriate, to providing Governments with technical and financial support in their efforts to deal with such problems;

9. Invites the organizations of the United Nations system to consider the findings and recommendations contained in the inter-sessional strategy paper of the Committee on Natural Resources entitled "Averting the multi-cause water crises ahead: key coping strategies", 3/ in particular with regard to the ongoing preparation of a comprehensive assessment of the freshwater resources of the world, and invites them to give wide dissemination to the strategy paper.